METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR THE STIMULATION OF HAIR GROWTH

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This application is a continuation-in-part of copending U.S. application Serial No 09/819,081, filed February 15, 2001, now U.S. Patent No. 6,629,971, which is a divisional application of U.S. application Serial No. 09/203,178, filed November 30, 1998, now U.S. patent 6,283,956.

Field of the Invention

The present invention generally relates to a system and method for the stimulation of hair growth, using a novel combination of photothermal, photochemical and photomodulatory alone or by also applying a drug or a cosmeceutical composition, naturally occurring chromophore, or other light-activated chromophore to or into the hair follicle hair bulb, hair bulge, hair stem cell or surrounding tissue and exposing the composition to electromagnetic radiation.

Background of the Invention

There are several known techniques for attempting to reduce or eliminate hair growth in human skin. A few of these known techniques such as topical minoxidil or the commerically available product "Rogaine" are scientifically proven and widely accepted as effective. However, their degree of efficacy varies greatly.

There are several processes which may be used for producing preferential damage of the hair but relatively few are known which stimulate hair growth. In one process the target may be natural melanin pigment in the hair shaft and surrounding supporting tissues. In another process the target may be an external chromophore or contaminant. Most of these processes tend to damage the hair, either by producing heat or by photo-acoustical shock waves. These known processes have varying degrees of effectiveness, but require multiple treatments and, in their current form, produce only partial permanent hair reduction.